



Senate Judiciary Committee

May 3, 2016

House Bills 4787 & 4830

As an organization committed to promoting and protecting women's safety and access to healthcare, we believe that no woman should be coerced into any decisions concerning her pregnancy. All reproductive health choices should be freely made. We oppose House Bills 4787 and 4830.

Coercive abortion laws, like HB 4787 and 4830, are part of a decade's long public and political campaign to portray any woman who seeks an abortion as confused, misled or coerced, regardless of the fact that studies consistently find this to be untrue.

Coerced abortion is only a very small piece of the much larger problem of reproductive coercion and violence against women. Many public-health professionals oppose these types of one-sided anti-coercion policies because they inhibit a comprehensive agenda on reproductive coercion from being established including more common forms of abuse like coercing a woman to become pregnant, to carry a pregnancy, and birth control sabotage.

By providing legal cover to only one, limited population of victims, this legislation politicizes a serious public health issue and ignores all other victims of reproductive coercion.

Furthermore, these bills are unnecessary because there are already laws on the books that protect women from the coercion and discrimination these bills address. Michigan's existing informed consent law already mandates that a woman's consent to an abortion must be "given freely without coercion."

Women in Michigan already receive support, counseling, and information when they are deciding whether or not to have an abortion. In accordance to state law, abortion providers screen all women for coercion and ensure patients have information and support to make the decision that is best for her.

If it is the goal of the Michigan Legislature to reduce the number of abortions in Michigan, preventing unintended pregnancies should be your top priority.

We should be working together to move forward commonsense policies that would improve access for low-income women to reproductive and prenatal health care, expand insurance coverage of

contraceptives, and provide comprehensive sex education to our young people. By focusing on preventing unintended pregnancies, we would reduce the need for elective abortions in Michigan and accomplish everyone's goals.

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